

**NANSEMOND RIVER HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT-ATHLETE NAMED
GATORADE VIRGINIA BOYS TRACK & FIELD PLAYER OF THE YEAR**

CHICAGO (June 29, 2022) — In its 37th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade today announced **Deondre Hardy** of **Nansemond River High School** is the **2021-22 Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year**. Hardy is the second Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Player of the Year to be chosen from Nansemond River High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Hardy as Virginia's best high school boys track & field athlete. Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Track & Field Player of the Year award to be announced in July, Hardy joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Lolo Jones (1997-98, Roosevelt High School, Iowa), Allyson Felix (2002-03, Los Angeles Baptist High School, Calif.), Robert Griffin III (2006-07, Copperas Cove High School, Texas), Grant Fisher (2014-15 & 2013-14, Grand Blanc High School, Mich.) and Candace Hill (2014-15, Rockdale County High School, Ga.).

The 5-foot-8, 140-pound senior won the 110-meter high hurdles and the triple jump at the Class 5 state meet this past season, leading the Warriors to a third-place finish as a team. Hardy's winning triple jump of 47 feet, 9.5 inches ranked No. 39 nationally among prep competitors in 2022 at the time of his selection, while his 110 hurdles time of 14.01 ranked No. 45 in the country this spring. He earned All-American honors in four events at the adidas Outdoor Nationals, taking bronze in both the 110 and the 400-meter intermediate hurdles, while running the third leg on the 4x200-meter relay and 1,000-meter Swedish relay teams with his club team.

Hardy has volunteered locally as a youth track coach. "Ever since his high school career began, Deondre was told by myself and other coaches that he was probably too short," said Marco McCoy, head coach of Nansemond River High School. "Comments like this fueled him. He's been counted out by so many and has always overcome any odds. I still recall at some of our first practices I wasn't so sure he could be a great hurdler and jumper, but after our first meet together he quickly changed my mind."

Hardy has maintained a 3.04 GPA in the classroom. He has signed a National Letter of Intent to compete on an athletic scholarship at Coastal Carolina University (S.C.) this fall.

The [Gatorade Player of the Year](#) program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport. The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport.

Hardy joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Track & Field Players of the Year Michael Bourne (2020-21, Cosby High School), Javonte' Harding (2019-20, Prince George High School), EJ Richardson III (2018-19, Bethel High School), and Daiqwaun Faircloth (2017-18, Nansemond River High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

Gatorade has a long-standing history of serving athlete communities and understands how sports instill valuable lifelong skills on and off the field. Through Gatorade's "Play it Forward" platform, Hardy has the opportunity to award a \$1,000 grant to a local or national organization of their choosing that helps young athletes realize the benefits of playing sports. Hardy is also eligible to submit a short video explaining why the organization they chose is deserving of one of twelve \$10,000 spotlight grants, which will be announced throughout the year. To date, Gatorade Player of the Year winners' grants have totaled more than \$3.5 million across more than 1,300 organizations.

Since the program's inception in 1985, Gatorade Player of the Year award recipients have won hundreds of professional and college championships, and many have also turned into pillars in their communities, becoming coaches, business owners and educators.

To learn more about the Gatorade Player of the Year program, check out past winners or to nominate student-athletes, visit playeroftheyear.gatorade.com or follow us on social media on Facebook at facebook.com/GatoradePOY, Instagram at instagram.com/Gatorade and Twitter at twitter.com/Gatorade.